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CURRENT
ANALYSES

(U) CHINA: PRESIDENT LI XIANNIAN'S US VISIT
WILL INTRODUCE YOUNGER LEADERS

(C/NF) Summary

The announcement of the composition of Chinese President Li Xiannian's delegation to the US July 23-29 has turned the visit from a largely ceremonial tour of an important but aging party elder into a rare opportunity to gauge at first hand, [redacted] two up-and-coming leaders-- Li Peng and Wang Zhaoguo--neither of whom has had significant exposure to the US. On most of their recent foreign trips, party elders have been accompanied by young leaders in an effort to broaden their experience and to expose foreign leaders to China's future political bosses. Li Peng occasionally is seen as successor to Premier Zhao Ziyang.

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Li Peng

(U) Vice Premier Li Peng, age 56, is well connected within the top leadership. After the death of his father, an early Communist Party "martyr," Li was shepherded by Zhou Enlai and his wife Deng Yingchao, now a Politburo member.

(C/NF) Since his elevation to Vice Premier from Vice Minister of Water Conservancy and Electric Power in 1983, Li has gradually taken on wider responsibility. His portfolio now includes the energy sector (he is a trained electrical engineer with a special interest in nuclear power), transportation, communications, and the electronics and computer industry. Li has taken a hard line on US involvement in nuclear power development in China. Although he is thought to respect American technology and expertise, earlier this year he declined an invitation to the US by industry

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representatives as inappropriate while the US-China nuclear agreement initialed last year was still in abeyance.

(C/NF) In recent months, Li has also taken a much more active and visible role in relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. He headed the Chinese delegation to the Chernenko funeral in March and last month returned from a lengthy trip to East Germany, Poland, and Hungary. Li was trained in the Soviet Union during the late 1940s and early 1950s and speaks Russian. Until recently, his overseas experience was almost exclusively in the Soviet bloc. Chinese officials have dropped hints to US diplomats that [redacted]

[redacted] this opportunity should be seized to familiarize Li with the US.

(C/NF) Ji Pengfei

State Councilor Ji, 76 and a former Minister of Foreign Affairs, is semi-retired and may step down altogether to an advisory role in the next year or so. Nevertheless, he is and will likely remain an extremely important foreign policy adviser with extensive ties to top leaders and a strong following in the ministry. A former protégé of Zhou Enlai and long-time associate of President Li, Ji is a member of several top party and state foreign affairs advisory and coordination groups and head of the government's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Work Group. Deng Xiaoping, in his celebrated censure last year of two National People's Congress vice chairmen, named Ji as one of only three people authorized to speak on Hong Kong policy. The other two were Deng himself and Zhao. On June 18, Ji was named chairman of the drafting committee for the Hong Kong basic law. [redacted]

[redacted] Ji also has a major voice in Taiwan affairs.

Ji is a [redacted] member of the party Central Committee and, although he has never reached the ultimate status of Politburo membership, is known to attend Politburo meetings on foreign policy. Ji is probably more orthodox and conservative than some of his younger reformist colleagues; his views are thought to be close to those of Li. He has accompanied Li on overseas trips, including a trip to Burma earlier this year.

As Minister of Foreign Affairs during the early 1970s, Ji was instrumental in implementing the decision to reestablish relations with the US. He is not known, however, to have ever visited the United States.

Wang Zhaoguo

(U) The 43-year-old Wang Zhaoguo, once a technician in one of China's more sophisticated plants, has been cited by Hu Yaobang

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as a representative of the "fourth generation" of Chinese leadership--following the Mao/Deng generation, the Hu Yaobang/Zhao Ziyang age group, and the Hu Qili cohort. Wang was "discovered" by Deng during an automobile factory briefing while on a provincial tour and has received Deng's public praise.

(U) His subsequent rise has been dramatic. Within two years, Wang jumped from factory vice manager to head of the Communist Youth League to head of the party Central Committee's powerful General Office. In the latter capacity, he is in charge of routine work for the party bureaucracy, including arranging important meetings, preparing agendas and briefing papers, and overseeing the flow of policy documents to top party leaders. Wang almost certainly will join the party Secretariat this fall and could even attain Politburo status. He has been closely associated with Hu, appearing at almost every one of Hu's interviews or meetings with foreigners.

(C/NF) Despite his attendance at the US-sponsored Dalian industrial management institute, [redacted]

[redacted] He is entirely a product of the communist system and probably had not left China until his visit to Japan last September. At that time, he made his debut in the foreign affairs arena with his appointment as China's chief representative to the 21st Century Committee for Sino-Japanese Friendship.

(C/NF) Lin Jiamei

President Li's wife, Mme. Lin. [redacted]

[redacted] has appeared relatively infrequently in public. She visited the US in 1980 as part of a three-week-long delegation sponsored by the National Committee on US-China Relations. Her principal interests seem to be children's affairs and education. She has also expressed interest in women's health issues and prenatal care. Mme. Lin, a lively conversationalist, has three children and three grandchildren.

(C/NF) Xu Hanbing

Ji Pengfei's wife, Mme. Xu, age 65, is an influential figure in her own right. For a number of years, she controlled the Foreign Ministry's personnel department. [redacted]

[redacted] She is now a counsellor in the consular affairs department of the ministry and a vice president of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs. She traveled to the US in 1983 as a member of a Foreign Ministry delegation.

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